

A SHORT HISTORY OF MY FAHER born WILLIAM JOHN JONES BUT AFTER 1928 incorporated the name HENTON the MAIDEN NAME OF MY MOTHER. This name was not always on his wartime documents, which made for much confusion and was not in fact made legal until 1943 at a cost of 10/6d.

My Father, William John Jones, was born posthumously, on the 23rd of December 1898 in Porthcawl, S.Wales. His father had been a chemist. The youngest of three children, he was brought up by his then 26 year old widowed mother.

Educated at Bridgend County School, S.Wales, followed by an engineering apprenticeship at Hillis Dry Dock and Engineering Co., with 1st class B.O.T. Certificate. 1914 -1917.

He enlisted, about 1917, in the RFC and became a pilot. He flew gas-bags with the fusilage of an aeroplane slung beneath to provide power and steering, taking some historic photographs while on submarine patrol, also various aircraft of the time.

1919-1924 he continued his education as 3rd and 2nd engineer in the Merchant Service.

1924-1926 Cardiff Technical College Mechanical Engineering and extra 1st class B.O.T. course.

During those years he travelled the "trade routes of the day". His letters are headed, Port Said, Queen Alexandra docks (Cardiff), Montreal, Barry, Santos, Rio Grande, Pedro, San Francisco, Vancouver, Shanghai, New Westminster, British Columbia, New York, Baltimore and Lisbon. I've followed these routes on a very old atlas, the index of which gave me the trades and trading of these ports.

Leaving the Merchant Navy and with his B.O.T. exams behind him he became a Royal Naval Reservist in 1927.

In 1928 he married the only daughter of a Barry Bank Manager, Gwilym Henton, known in the family as Dada. Working his way up the ladder in a Northern Power Station he eventually became senior charge engineer at Kearsley Power Station, Manchester. He was lucky to have this job held open for him if he survived the war.

As a reservist, this involved him in regular exercises in home waters. Invergordon, London and Portsmouth. The last of these took place in May 1937 when his ship, HMS Revenge, was the host ship for the German 'Graf von Spee', with hundreds of ships gathered for the Fleet Review at Portsmouth.

An interesting observation made by him. "I don't think more than one person here speaks German, but I am told that nearly all the Germans speak English."

In September 1939 he was called up within two weeks of the outbreak of WWII. Had the call come three months later he would have been considered too old?

As Engineer Officer he served first in 'Fleet Tenders A and B' as the dummy battleships were known. Then HMS Broke, where he was mentioned in despatches with his brother officer, the late Peter Scott, for their involvement in the rescue in an Atlantic storm of 180 men from the burning (Cormoran)

Promoted Engineer Commander of HMS Cairo, he was awarded the DSO for personal bravery during Operation Harpoon (June 1942) in the relief of Malta.

Two months later Cairo was torpedoed during the epic convoy to Malta known as Operation Pedestal. He, and almost all of the ship's company were rescued by HMS Wilton and transferred to HMS Rodney at Gibraltar.

His next ship was HMS Diomedea, before being deputed to Harland & Wolff Ltd. Belfast as Chief Engineer of HMS Glory, one of the first of the Light Aircraft Carriers, then being built. He was Engineer overseer with special responsibilities for manufacture and inspection of her main turbines, boilers and auxiliary plant, flight deck machinery and patrol services.

After her launch and trials, she sailed to the Far East, where the surrender of the Japanese South East Asia Command at Rabaul, New Guinea, took place on the flight deck.

Glory then served as a Hospital Ship, transporting liberated prisoners of war to Canada and Australia. On these recovery and repatriation trips she covered 24,312 nautical miles in three months.

These years between 1940 and 1945 took him from North to south, East and West more than once with, for the last lap practically hitching a lift on the (ex Admiralty yacht) 'Enchantress' from Australia to UK., with a Captain who first wanted to see more of the world. The journey took nearly six weeks.

In 'civvy street' for the second time, he took charge, as Superintendent, of the then modern and show-piece generating station Agecroft 'B' (Manchester) where he served until he suddenly died in 1959 from a coronary thrombosis.

A much loved and respected man. Agecroft power station flew their flag at half mast and the staff stood outside with bared heads, as the funeral went by.